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SUBJECT: SOUTH SUDAN: MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF  
REGIONAL AFFAIRS NHIAL DENG NHIAL

¶1. (SBU) Summary: CG Juba met with Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Minister of Regional Affairs Nhial Deng Nhial shortly before Nhial departed for Khartoum en route to Cairo as head of a GoSS delegation that includes the Ministers of Justice and Public Service, sent to investigate the killing of Sudanese refugees last December 30. Nhial commented that the SPLM must push the NCP harder on CPA implementation and play a bigger role in national politics. He said that the current political dynamic in the NCP is favoring President Bashir over Vice President Taha, which could pose additional problems. End summary.

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Problems with CPA Implementation  
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¶2. (SBU) Nhial commented that staying in power, not the success of the CPA, preoccupied the National Congress Party (NCP). As a result, CPA implementation has been agonizingly slow. He stressed that the SPLM must push harder on national issues, including Darfur.

¶3. (SBU) Nhial observed that the Assessment and Evaluation Commission must function effectively in order that the international community play its role in pressuring the northerners to meet their obligations. He cautioned that this was the last chance to cement the peace. If the CPA unraveled, "God only knows what will happen next."

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The Balance of Power in Khartoum  
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¶4. (SBU) Nhial said that President Beshir's impulsiveness was sometimes problematic. Beshir was also in general denial about Sudan's problems, inevitably trying to claim that the source of the country's woes was totally external in nature, and Sudan the victim. Nhial said that Vice President Taha took a more measured view of the situation, but his influence in Khartoum was waning, just as Turabi's once-considerable influence declined. Certain NIF hardliners continued to trip up CPA implementation at every step. He cited Presidential Assistant and NCP Deputy Chairman for Political Affairs Nafie Ali Nafie as supremely confident. Nhial said that as long as the National Petroleum Commission remained in Nafie's pocket, it would never work. He listed the NCP's refusal to form and pay the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), insisting the GoSS should continue to fund its own contingent, as another stratagem to undercut the CPA.

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The National Role of the SPLM  
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¶5. (SBU) The Minister noted that the fate of the South would be determined in Khartoum, and the South could still fail

despite internal southern unity. Therefore, the SPLM had no alternative but to engage in the North. Other traditional political parties were a spent force, and the SPLM was the only party that could act as a counterbalance on the NCP and other Islamist forces. Nhial lamented the untimely loss of John Garang.

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Comment  
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¶6. (SBU) While Nhial did not mention Kiir by name, the underlying theme was that SPLM leadership had failed to take a hard enough line with the NCP on CPA implementation and national issues. Kiir's recent speech may indicate that he has heard the message from Garang's former closest followers and is reacting accordingly. Nhial came off as pessimistic as CG Juba officials have seen him. End comment.

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Bio Data  
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¶7. (SBU) Nhial Deng is the son of noted southern politician William Deng, killed by northern forces in 1968. An avid reader and one of the most cerebral of senior SPLM officials, Deng has studied law. He played a role in negotiating the Naivasha agreement and headed the SPLM's contingent to the Joint National Transition Team in Khartoum. Deng was projected as a rival to Salva Kiir in 2004 for the second ranking figure in the SPLM. He was also odds-on favorite to serve as foreign minister in the Government of National Unity, and reportedly took Salva Kiir's nomination of Lam Akol for that position as a personal defeat. He employs sophisticated reasoning and

KHARTOUM 00000274 002 OF 002

probably shares Garang's national vision for Sudan more than most other senior officials in the South.

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